

Downtown Boone Development Association

Monthly Board Meeting - March 6, 2014

In attendance: Sheri Moretz, Dempsey Wilcox, Evalyn Sudderth, Jennifer Pena, Andy Stallings, Brad Harmon, Greg Lovins, Lynne Mason, Eric Plaa, Colton Lenz

Staff in attendance: Virginia Falck, Pilar Fotta, Mark Freed, Victoria Parnell (intern)

Others in attendance: Officer Mike Foley, Meliss Garramone

Dempsey called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

Brad made a motion to accept the agenda. Andy seconded.

Eric noted that the minutes regarding the test streetlight stated the location incorrectly, and instead of Water and Depot Streets, it should be Water and King streets.

Dempsey then asked for a motion to approve the amended minutes. Eric so moved, Brad seconded. All approved.

Finances: Virginia provided an update on the DBDA finances, noting that the January and February purchases are down because most event-related purchases take place later in the year. The current financial statement reflects usual monthly expenses such as rent and storage. She also noted that reimbursables for the town reflect the same trend.

Brad made a motion approve the financials statement. Greg seconded. All approved.

Summer Concerts: Mark reported on the upcoming Summer Concerts series, asking the board for the same level of sponsorship (\$1,500) we provided last year. Dempsey asked about the funds raised through donations, and Mark responded that they were used to compensate the artists for their performances and for promotion. He also noted that they upgraded some of the sound system equipment last year, and that Farmers Rent-all has donated the stage in the past for the Doc Watson event, but he is hoping to purchase that at some point to use on numerous occasions, including inside.

Andy made a motion to approve \$1,500 to fund the 2014 Summer Concerts series. Brad seconded. All approved.

Streetscape lighting: Virginia reminded the board that we will be retrofitting the streetlights downtown to improve the dim lighting situation. The total cost comes to \$19,928.60 to update all the new street and sidewalk lamps, which includes replacing the bulb as well as part of the housing. The lights will still be LED, but will be a higher output of light. The cost is \$590/each for streetlights, \$545/each for sidewalk lights. As soon as she receives approval from the Town they will purchase the lights. There should be no downtime, and the retrofit can be done in sections or all at once.

Eric asked about a comment from someone who noted the bulbs will now rest below the shade, and if that would create an issue with shining into apartments and businesses. Pilar suggested purchasing and installing a sample of the sidewalk light retrofit like we did for the streetlight (on the Corner of King and Waters). Dempsey then suggested ordering a couple of samples to install, including another streetlight retrofit as well as two sidewalk retrofits, and review before making the total purchase. Andy expressed concern that we aren't looking into other companies for quotes, and that we should gather more information before proceeding. Pilar noted that if we were to use retrofits from a

different company, it would void the warranty on the lights and if something were to break it would cost more to fix.

Eric made a motion to approve funds to order and install 4 sample lights, including 2 street and 2 sidewalk lights. Colton seconded. Andy opposed, all others approved. Motion carried.

On further discussion the group reached an agreement that we should set up the sample tests in the main downtown section, away from the larger standard streetlights on the edge of downtown near spots like the courthouse (where the existing sample is), to obtain an unpolluted sample of how the lights will work.

Virginia also mentioned that we might want to consider installing lights near the Turchin Center section of King Street, and also on the sidewalk near Robert Charles Salon (across from the fire station).

Promotions Committee: Meliss Garramone from Murphy's presented a report on the first meeting of the promotions committee. She was the only person besides Virginia to attend the meeting. As follow-up, she acquired bids for billboards, and suggested that the DBDA board needs to fine-tune what our mission and goals are for billboards before proceeding. The cost would be \$1,500 to run one billboard for four weeks, \$2,000 to run two. Jamie asked if we could determine pricing for a year to see if there are any price breaks.

Meliss asked the group where they would be interested in placing the billboards, and noted that the billboard company had spots available in places such as Huntersville, Gastonia and Charlotte. Sheri suggested that we could capitalize on ads that are currently run by High Country Host, noting that HCH is running several billboards promoting the mountains in the Piedmont region, and that we should consider putting Downtown Boone locations closer to town, perhaps Hwy 321 in Lenoir, Hwy 421 in Wilkesboro, or even closer, such as Hwy 321 between Blowing Rock and Boone or Hwy 105 between Linville and Foscoe. Meliss noted that she would inquire about locations in the area.

Missy also asked about messaging, with the theme of Historic Downtown Boone: Eat, Play Shop as one suggestion, or perhaps considering digital billboards and advertising different events. Sheri suggested considering something different than Eat, Shop, Play, and Jennifer agreed, noting that other towns like Burlington use that same messaging. Meliss suggested we hold a contest for town residents and stakeholders to participate in, asking for 3 - 6 words you use to describe downtown Boone.

Eric recounted when Columbia, S.C., redid their marketing, they came up with Famously Hot, which was somewhat controversial, but the controversy stirred interest in the town and brought in visitors. Andy suggested the word Cool, and Eric suggested Famously Cool (Famously Cool ~ Downtown Boone). Virginia will send out an email to solicit brainstorming ideas from the Board.

Virginia noted that Charlie Travis, a promotion committee member, was concerned about us using the phrase Historic Downtown Boone, because folks have different ideas about Historic, and our downtown might not meet that concept, and suggested that we consider moving away from that messaging.

Sheri noted that the TDA is going through an extensive rebranding with an ad agency to help develop a clear idea of what Boone & Watauga County are. She suggested that we wait to see what they come up with before making any major decisions. Lynne noted this might be a good way to foster more collaboration within the town.

Brochure with Map: Virginia received a request for more brochures with maps, and would like to repurpose the Choose & Cut version from last fall to create a year-round version as a tri-fold. She also suggested that we could use a brochure service to help distribute the brochures.

Lynne said that she has heard requests from hotels and businesses for handouts showing events happening in downtown, and Sheri noted that the TDA will possibly have a special calendar that will show events. Eric asked if Cultural Resources could produce a printed weekly calendar that we could post in the map kiosk downtown, and Virginia responded that she would look into it.

Easter Eggstravaganza: Virginia reported this is moving forward, if it rains the event will take place at the Library. She also noted that the accompanying Storywalk is nearly set up, with a path that will go up Howard Street between Depot and Waters, and then back down King Street to the Jones House. She noted that she would like to have a Storywalk on the Turchin section of King Street, but with the construction across from Boone Saloon, she decided it would be best to wait until construction is completed, and is thinking Halloween.

Design Committee: Virginia would like to organize a design committee to make decisions on the façade grant, review applications for the grant, and make decisions on public art downtown. She noted it would be good to have at least 5 individuals on that committee. Eric, Andy, Brad, Jamie and Colton agreed to participate. Virginia will send an email to that group to schedule a meeting in the latter part of March.

Other Business

Depot Street: Andy brought up that he would like to repave south Depot Street from King to Rivers streets. Jamie added that the pedestrian crosswalks at the Howard Street intersection on that section of Depot are in desperate need of restriping. Lynne noted she would bring that up at Council. She also noted the traffic study that will be coming up might change how Depot Street is used.

Christmas Committee: Virginia would like to pull together a special committee to discuss redesigning our Christmas decorations and celebration. Lynne and Virginia both suggested sending a note to all Downtown businesses to garner participation and members for this committee.

Parking Appeals Committee: Andy reported that he discovered a sign on the corner of Depot and Howards streets that needs to be changed to a Loading Zone sign instead of No Parking.

Skateboarding: Eric noticed there were skateboarders doing tricks beside and even bouncing off of the Daniel Boone monument, and requested that we look into signage for this. Pilar said there have been other recent incidents downtown, and noted there is an ordinance and that town employees are looking into this.

With no further business, **Brad made a motion to adjourn. Colton seconded.** Dempsey adjourned the meeting at 9:29 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Jamie Goodman